



Newsletter



María-Christina with Putacca women, delighted to welcome us.

What an adventure!

Last August, I was able to join the *Wings of Hope* team on their recent mission.

Before I go any further, I'd like to give you a little background.



My loving mother, Maria Cristina Gonzalez, was a college Spanish and Latin American culture teacher for over 25 years. In the last years of her career, she took part in more than a dozen

missions abroad, including at least seven in Peru. My mother, of Mexican origin, developed a real love affair with Peru. To my great regret, I was never able to accompany her on her missions to Peru, as I was studying medicine.

During her many travels, my mother would return with stories of incredible adventures and charm us with the extraordinary legends of the Inca people. **Her heart was filled with passion and admiration for the great strength and love of the Peruvian people.** Sadly, a few years ago, my mother died of ovarian cancer at the age of 66. My life was turned upside down. Overnight, I lost the love of my life. I had also completely lost my bearings.

A year after his death, the pandemic struck. Having been a Covid doctor throughout this period, it was hard for me to keep my spirits up and my life in balance. In July 2022, guided by my intuition,

I contacted André Franche. My mother's absence was extremely painful, and I was looking for a way to reconnect with her. André Franche suggested I accompany him on a mission to **follow in my mother's footsteps.**

My trip to Peru was a complete success. Every time I turned a corner, in Lima, Atalaya, in the middle of the jungle



or in the Andes at 4000 m altitude, I felt my mother's energy. I **understood very well the connection my mother had with the Peruvian people, because I felt it with all my being.**

Throughout this adventure, I was greatly impressed by the management and efficiency of the *Wings of Hope* projects. Water is life! **The impact on the health and development of communities is absolutely remarkable.** That's



why I decided to get involved, and it's with great pride that I'm now a member of this extraordinary team. Thank you to Peru and *Wings of Hope* for giving me back my wings!

Dr. Marie-Christina Gonzalez Romulus

Marie-Christina welcomed by chief Jhair Vasquez at Nueva Galilea

Sofia: a water warrior!



Sofia on the right and an elderly peasant woman from San Miguel de Rayme.

Sofia Poma, 64, is the mother of three children and grandmother of four grandchildren. All her life, she and her husband have suffered from a lack of water for their home and small-scale farming. Despite the lack of means and resources, Sofia has always been active in her community, San Miguel de Rayme. **She feels great empathy for children suffering from anemia and for the elderly.** Her interventions have earned her the respect of her community.

In 2020, she sees the neighboring community of Rayme Alto carrying out its own water project with the support of *Alas de Esperanza*. **Why can't we do the same?**

So she tells her neighbors, organizes a meeting with the whole community and is elected president of the water committee. The request for support soon reached the office of our coordinator in Peru. **Sofia leads the project with true leadership.** She makes sure that everyone contributes the manpower planned. We paid tribute to her at the inauguration on August 14. In closing, I'd like to point out that Sofia is illiterate. She told me how sad she was that she never had the chance to go to school, and that she couldn't read or write. On the other hand, **Sofia is a true water warrior.** Bravo Sofia!

André Franche

Other projects inaugurated during the August 2023 mission

On August 5, inauguration at **Nueva Esperanza**, Huaura province, where perforating the well in the rock caused many headaches. Also, digging trenches in this rocky soil was a painful task for the members of this community. A large part of the project had been carried out during the pandemic, and thanks to the diligence of Saída, chairwoman of the water committee, the sanitary protocol was followed to the letter.

On August 8, we were in **Santa Clara** on the Urubamba River. It was a day of great rejoicing for this Yeni and Asháninka community. We continued on August 9 to **Santa Rosita de Shirintiari** on the Tambo River to inaugurate the extension of the water system. The typical drawings painted on the reservoir show the pride, not to say the hubris, of these Asháninkas. Their water system has become a tourist attraction in the region.

The next day, we go to **Nueva Galilea** on the Ucayali River to celebrate the community's efforts. The teachers and their students perform a number of folk dances. For the occasion,



The Nueva Esperanza drinking water committee: in the center, Saída, the president.



Nueva Galilea infrastructure for water



A modern toilet in the Amazon: this lovely hut houses the sink and shower. Bravo to the artisans of Santa Clara!



The Nueva Galilea water festival

these natives proudly display their traditional costumes, including their arrows. María-Christina is impressed by the beautiful tablecloth made of large banana leaves that covers the table where we have our meal.



Banana leaves as a tablecloth for a meal in Nueva Galilea.



Santa Rosita de Shirintiari: André Franche, María-Christina and the engineer Ángel Huaman in front of the beautifully decorated reservoir, now a tourist attraction!

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